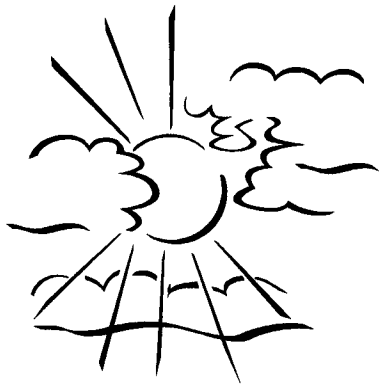


***Department
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Wednesday, May 3, 2006

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OAKLAND COUNTY

Abraham sent to boys' training camp

Prosecutor weighs appeal over fight

May 3, 2006

BY JACK KRESNAK
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

At age 11, Nathaniel Abraham, left, killed Ronnie Greene Jr. outside a Pontiac party store.

Nathaniel Abraham, who was 11 when he shot and killed a man in Pontiac and became one of the youngest people in the country convicted of murder, was ordered released Tuesday from the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School and sent to a medium-security training camp for boys in northern Michigan.

The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office may appeal the ruling because Probate Judge Eugene Moore declined to view a videotape of a Jan. 21 fight at Maxey that involved Abraham, Chief Assistant Prosecutor Deborah Carley said.

"There's been a problem with him the entire time he's been in custody," said Carley, who verbally sparred with the judge during a hearing that lasted more than three hours.

But Abraham, now 20, "has finally earned his way out of Maxey," his attorney, Daniel Bagdade, said. "It really is a kind of watershed moment in this case from Nate's point of view."

Bagdade said everyone at the hearing except the prosecutor "had nothing but good things to say about" Abraham.

Abraham has been in the maximum-security center at Maxey in Livingston County's Green Oak Township for more than six years after being convicted of second-degree murder in the October 1997 shooting death of Ronnie Greene Jr. outside a Pontiac party store.

Moore had the option of sentencing Abraham to adult prison, a juvenile rehabilitation facility until age 21 or give him a so-called "blended sentence" in which adult prison is possible if a juvenile does not cooperate in rehabilitation efforts.

The judge chose to send Abraham to Maxey's juvenile rehabilitation program without a possible adult prison sentence.

Abraham turns 21 in January 2007, when the court's jurisdiction over him will end.

Moore ordered participants in the case not to mention the name of the camp Abraham is being sent to, because of security concerns. The facility has an open campus but is locked at night.

Abraham is expected to spend two months there participating in wilderness camping and educational programs, said Leonard Dixon, director of the Bureau of Juvenile Justice for the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Then, Abraham likely would be sent to a halfway house operated by that agency, Dixon said.

Elaine Rosati, a lawyer and clinical social worker Moore appointed last year to monitor Abraham's progress at Maxey, said Abraham "has in the last two months done a tremendous job of moving forward."

Moore set a June 20 review hearing to see how Abraham is handling the new placement.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com.

Wednesday, May 03, 2006

State eases grip on young killer With 9 months left in term, man convicted at 13 will go to facility that allows more freedom.

Jennifer Chambers / The Detroit News

PONTIAC -- Michigan's youngest convicted killer will be moved to a new juvenile facility in northern Michigan where he will have more freedom and begin regular contact with the public.

Oakland County Probate Judge Eugene A. Moore on Tuesday ordered that Nathaniel Abraham be moved from his placement in medium-security at W.J. Maxey Training Center in Whitmore Lake to Nokomis Challenge Center in Prudenville, where juveniles are permitted to leave with staffers for outings such as camping trips.

Abraham, now 20, was 11 years old when he fired a sniper shot from a hilltop in Pontiac, killing an 18-year-old man. He has less than nine months left in his second-degree murder sentence.

At the end of that time, Abraham, who at age 13 in 1999 was the youngest person convicted of murder in the United States, will walk out of state custody and be released into society.

Prosecutors objected Tuesday to the transfer, saying Abraham is still not rehabilitated and suffers from problems with anger and respecting authority despite seven years of rehabilitation at Maxey.

They say he should stay locked up at Maxey until he is 21.

The request to move Abraham was prompted by his improved behavior and attitude the last six weeks, said Harry Adams, Abraham's social worker at Maxey.

Abraham has been working as a janitor six hours a day, visiting communities across the region for speaking engagements on his life and experience in juvenile justice and has had three visits with members of his extended family in mid-Michigan.

"His socialization skills have improved with his movement into the community and made him less anxious about going into the outside world," Adams told the court.

"Maxey has done everything they can for him. There is nothing left at this point."

Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Deborah Carley read from Adams' report from March which said Abraham was "agitated and moody" and showed a pattern of disrespect for authority. Carley also mentioned a fight Abraham was involved in four days after his last court hearing in Oakland County.

"We are supposed to accept that (six weeks) later a second-degree murderer is ready to be rehabilitated? (Six weeks) out of 9 1/2 years isn't good enough for me," Carley said.

At the hearing, Abraham's lawyers asked that the name and location of the new facility be kept from the media and the public, saying in order to fully rehabilitate Abraham, he needs to be protected from such scrutiny.

Carley said there's no legal basis to suppress the information.

"My job is the protection of the community, not just in Oakland County but in any county Nate walks into. I think people need to know the youngest killer in America is going into their community," Carley said.

Moore sided with defense lawyers and ordered all parties in the case to not disclose the name or location of the new facility. The name of the facility was inadvertently disclosed in court during testimony.

The transfer is expected to take place in the next few weeks, state officials said.

You can reach Jennifer Chambers at (248) 647-7402 or *jchambers@detnews.com*.

Judge will move young killer, but won't say where

Prosecutor says Nate Abraham is not ready to begin reintroduction to society, but judge says it will happen

By STEPHEN FRYE
Of The Oakland Press

Web-posted May 3, 2006

Nathaniel Abraham, a killer at age 11, will be moved into a less restrictive juvenile holding facility, but the location will not be released to the public, a judge ruled Tuesday in a contentious hearing. Oakland County Probate Judge Eugene Arthur Moore sparred several times with Chief Deputy Oakland County Prosecutor Deborah Carley, who adamantly maintains that Abraham poses a threat to the public.

On Tuesday, Carley pointed to a fight Abraham became involved in Jan. 21, just four days after his last court hearing, at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School in Whitmore Lake.

Carley had a video of the fight from the facility security cameras, but Moore refused to let her play that, despite her repeated requests to show it as evidence.

"It's not going to be admitted into this courtroom as evidence," Moore said. "Do you understand the word, No?" "

Abraham admitted being in the fight, though he said he had tried "to avoid the situation." He said it started because he tried holding another youth accountable for mistakes but that he should have handled the situation differently.

Moore ruled that Abraham, who will be released in January from state custody no matter how he performs, will be sent to an open medium-security facility somewhere in Michigan, from where he will take youth encounter camping outings into the Upper Peninsula.

Abraham will likely stay at this facility for 30 to 60 days. Then, the 20-year-old - who has been in state custody since his arrest in 1997 - may be placed into a setting that is less restrictive and will begin to re-enter society.

Specific locations for any future placement will not be disclosed in open court to the public, Moore ruled.

"I think that is necessary for the protection of Nathaniel and protection of the public," Moore said.

The judge said he would issue a gag order to prohibit attorneys from disclosing the location.

Moore and Carley sparred several times Tuesday, including over whether to disclose Abraham's placement, whether to display evidence of the January fight at Maxey, and over what roles each side has in this case.

Carley said her chief role in this case is to protect the public from harm.

"I do not feel Nate Abraham is safe to be released," Carley said.

Moore said his role is also dominated by protection of the public.

"The public cannot be protected, with both juvenile and adults, unless when they are incarcerated, we do something to change their behavior," Moore said.

Abraham was convicted of second-degree murder in 1999 and sentenced as a juvenile by Moore, meaning he cannot be held past age 21.

Abraham told Moore that being out in the community on supervised visits has changed his perspective, and he wants to continue preparing to reenter society, "just to get accustomed to everyday living." Abraham said it is "definitely a challenge, but I'm looking forward to it."

Carley pounced on social worker Harry Adams, who works with Abraham at Maxey, for changing his recommendation in two reports separated by about six weeks.

Adams reported that Abraham has continued to show remorse for killing Ronnie Greene Jr. in October 1997; has shown leadership with other troubled youths; has been consistent and respectful in his employment in the janitorial department at Maxey; and has volunteered his own time to help others.

"He has a tremendous desire to work with other people, especially children," said Adams, who added that Abraham seems gifted when addressing church groups and interacting with strangers about his plight.

But an earlier report in March showed that Abraham remained moody, agitated and socialized with youths who had poor attitudes.

"Six weeks is all it takes to be released to a halfway house?" Carley asked, noting that for years Abraham had suffered from problems with authority.

"He has made progress," Adams answered. "He needs to be in an environment where those gifts can blossom even more. It will be safe for him and the community to get that exposure now. He's earned that."

Adams also said Abraham was not the aggressor in the Jan. 21 fight between him and another youth, which resulted in a staff member who tried to break it up falling down and injuring himself.

Abraham's attorney, Daniel Bagdade, said both he and Abraham are pleased with the judge's ruling.

"He's overjoyed," Bagdade said. "He's very confident, and he's taking this very seriously. He knows that he still has a long hard road ahead."

Moore set Abraham's next review hearing for June 20, but that may be conducted earlier if either side requests it.

May 3, 7:49 AM EDT

Young killer to leave training school for juvenile camp

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) -- A judge has ordered Nathaniel Abraham, who murdered a man with a sniper shot at 11, to enter a lower-security juvenile lockup.

Abraham, 20, has been in juvenile detention since the 1997 shooting death of 18-year-old Ronnie Lee Greene in Pontiac. He was convicted of second-degree murder as an adult but sentenced as a juvenile. Abraham is scheduled for release in January 2007, when he turns 21.

"His socialization skills have improved with his movement into the community and made him less anxious about going into the outside world," Harry Adams, Abraham's social worker at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School, told Oakland County Probate Judge Eugene Moore at a hearing Tuesday.

Moore then ordered Abraham released from Maxey and sent to a medium-security juvenile camp. The Detroit News identified it as the Nokomis Challenge Center in Prudenville.

The county prosecutor's office may appeal the ruling because Moore declined to view a videotape of a Jan. 21 fight at Maxey that involved Abraham, Assistant Prosecutor Deborah Carley told the Detroit Free Press.

Defense lawyer Daniel Bagdade said Abraham "has finally earned his way out of Maxey. It really is a kind of watershed moment in this case from Nate's point of view."

Moore scheduled a June 20 review hearing on how Abraham is handling his new situation.

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A Mother Speaks About her Baby's Death

By Brandon Truttling, WXYZ News
Web produced by Christine Lasek

May 3, 2006

A mother's shock and anger showed through when she spoke to 7 Action News for the first time since her 9-month-old baby was killed at the hands of the child's own father. The father claims he did it to free his son from the evils of this world.

Betty Jenkins is heartbroken and in shock after the murder of her 9-month-old son Raphael. The baby's father and Betty's boyfriend, Raphael Sr., allegedly stabbed the baby several times, and left him in a backyard several blocks away.

The murder happened late last Friday night. Betty told 7 Action News that she and her boyfriend were reading the bible when Raphael Sr. "snapped."

He starting throwing their belongings off the porch, and went into the basement and cut himself with a knife. He then grabbed the baby and ran out the door.

The next time Betty saw Raphael Sr., she says he was naked, covered with blood, and in police custody.

"I asked him, 'Where's my baby? What did you do with the baby?' Then he said, 'He's no longer part of this world,'" Betty told 7 Action News.

Betty's father, Harold McCalebb, has been at her side since the incident, and they're trying desperately to cope.

"He should be put away for life," Betty said. "It still feels like a nightmare now. I just wish I would wake up and hold my baby."

Parents agree to terminate rights

Wednesday, May 03, 2006

By John Tunison
The Grand Rapids Press

ALLEGAN -- The ongoing child sexual abuse in an Allegan area home was something a mother and father could not have missed, prosecutors say.

The signs should have been obvious, especially with evidence that children from two families were sexually assaulted, beaten and sometimes locked in a basement with the lights off, according to prosecutors.

A 26-year-old man and his 25-year-old wife, who lived in the home for months, agreed Tuesday to terminate their parental rights in Allegan County Family Court.

The couple have an 11-month-old daughter together and the woman has an 8-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son with two other fathers.

Three men who also lived in the home -- a man, his 56-year-old father and a 73-year-old grandfather of the man who terminated parental rights Tuesday -- are charged with various sex-related crimes.

Police say two families lived in the home and seven children, all 9 or younger, were abused over several months. Detectives discovered thousands of digital images of child pornography in the house.

Children living at the home told police they were forced to perform sex acts on each other and the father and son.

The parents in court Tuesday have not been charged in the case, but prosecutors said they failed to protect their children from fall 2005 to March.

"They knew or should have known what was going on," Assistant Prosecutor Margaret Bakker said. "To have 10,000 images taken, it's pretty devastating evidence against them.

"How could they not have known where their children were?" she asked.

The 25-year-old mother, as well as relatives in the courtroom, wiped tears from their eyes as she signed three papers to relinquish her rights.

The couple will be allowed a "goodbye visit" with the children at the discretion of their counselor, then must sever all contact.

The three children, now in foster care, will be adopted into new families through the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Prosecutors used two pieces of evidence to justify the termination.

The mother admitted she was aware of a 1993 sexual assault conviction for the 56-year-old man and that he was prohibited from contact with minors, but still allowed him around her children.

The father admitted he was convicted of sexually assaulting his stepsister as a juvenile in 1990.

Another termination hearing, for the parents of four other children removed from the home, is scheduled for next week.

The father of the children, who is the son of the 56-year-old, is charged with sex crimes.

MACOMB COUNTY

Kids testify: Aunt shot drugs into us

Warren grandma, daughter face trial

May 3, 2006

BY DAN CORTEZ

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The 12-year-old recalled going to watch TV in the basement of his grandmother's home, his belly full of spaghetti, when his aunt made him an offer.

"My aunt gave me drugs. She asked me if I wanted some and I said, 'I guess.' She put the stuff in my arm," the mop-topped boy testified Tuesday in 37th District Court in Warren. He recalled little else of Jan. 25. He overdosed at the home in Warren and was rushed to a hospital, prompting an investigation that led to the arrest of his aunt Jacqueline Vuich and his grandmother Jan Ruby Catton.

The boy went on to testify in their preliminary exam that it wasn't the first time Vuich used drugs with him, and his 15-year-old cousin testified that Vuich also injected her with drugs.

Catton and Vuich -- mother and daughter -- were bound over for trial by Judge Walter Jakubowski.

Vuich faces four charges of delivery of less than 50 grams of an illicit narcotic to a minor and possession of less than 25 grams of a narcotic. Three of the delivery charges were added Tuesday in response to the 15-year-old's claims.

Catton, already facing one misdemeanor count of maintaining a drug house, seven felony counts of second-degree child abuse and one felony count of maintaining a prostitution house, will face an additional charge of second-degree child abuse.

The 15-year-old girl testified that Vuich injected heroin into the girl's arm and smoked crack cocaine with her.

The girl said she routinely went with "Aunt Jackie" to a home in Detroit to buy and use crack. She said Vuich would bring drugs back to Catton's home and hide them in spots like a hole in the bathroom floor.

The girl also said Catton knew Vuich had sex with men for money behind a curtain in the basement at the five-bedroom home.

"They were tricks," the girl testified of the men she said frequented the home. "They were there to have sex with Jackie and get high. They were ugly."

Macomb County Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Andary said as many as nine children, including the 12-year-old boy and 15-year-old girl, lived at the home between late 2004 and earlier this year, and that Catton was the legal guardian for most of them. Andary

charged that Catton knew about the stashed drugs and knew that Vuich used the home for prostitution.

"She at no point took it upon herself to remove the drugs from the home," Andary said during the exam.

Catton's lawyer, Susan Chrzanowski, said her client did not know Vuich worked as a prostitute at the home and tried to keep Vuich and the drugs out of the house. Catton even called police about Vuich, Chrzanowski said. But Vuich and at least one other daughter who Catton suspected used drugs in the house would climb through windows to get inside.

"The daughters disobeyed," Chrzanowski said in asking that her client be charged only with one misdemeanor count of child abuse. "She did not turn a blind eye. She told the kids not to be with Aunt Jackie."

Catton is free on bond. Vuich is being held in the Macomb County Jail in lieu of \$300,000 bond. Both women are due in Circuit Court on May 15.

Contact **DAN CORTEZ** at 586-469

No American should be uninsured

Local programs are good, but many gaps remain

Wednesday, May 03, 2006

Some 46 million Americans have no health insurance. About a million of them live in Michigan.

For many of the uninsured, it means going without health care. For others, it means being consumed by medical bills, debt and, for some, bankruptcy.

This week is Cover the Uninsured Week for advocates of widening access to health care for all Americans. They're lobbying Congress and state legislatures and, in general, attempting to raise awareness of the problem.

Michigan residents are a little better off than the nation as a whole. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in 2004, 11 percent of Michigan residents had no coverage, compared to 16 percent of all Americans. That is the result of Michigan's unionized auto industry, which has provided health insurance benefits to workers. But we all know that those benefits are eating some domestic automakers alive. And as jobs in Michigan's auto sector dry up, there are fewer people with health insurance.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm, in her State of the State speech, announced her Michigan FIRST health care plan, which is intended to make affordable health insurance available to a half-million workers not eligible for Medicaid but without employer-based health insurance.

We're eager to hear the details, especially how such a program would be funded in this cash-strapped state.

Local programs across the state, including ones in Washtenaw County, help fill in the gap, but are no substitute for a comprehensive health insurance program that leaves no American uninsured.

The Kalamazoo Gazette

Published May 3, 2006

Medicare: Crisis deepens, and Washington seems incapable of reform

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Circle the year at the top of your calendars as a reminder that 2006 marks a sobering turning point.

This is the year, according to government reports, when the Medicare hospital insurance trust fund is projected to spend more than the amount collected in taxes and premiums.

What it means, essentially, is that Medicare continues to glide on a path toward going broke.

The new government report says the Medicare trust fund will actually be depleted two years earlier than expected, in 2018.

Medicare's crisis is worsened by the obscenely expensive prescription drug program.

Federal officials now estimate the drug program will cost \$788 billion in the next decade.

If there's good news in that, it's because the estimate is improved over previous estimates that pegged the 10-year cost at \$997 billion.

Nonetheless, the drug program, combined with the 78 million baby boomers headed into retirement, foreshadows an unsustainable program.

There is no consensus for national health-care reform. In the short run, the states are doing what they can. Massachusetts recently approved a system that will leave just one percent of the state's population uninsured. It's complicated and expensive - about \$125

million over three years. Yet, the fact that Massachusetts hammered out a bipartisan health-care plan should encourage Michigan and others states to do the same.

Congress, it appears, will be taking its health care cues from the states. It sure ought to. It has a dozen years left before Medicare's bottom line begins to look like a death spiral.

Cadillac News

May 3, 2006

Hoekstra's office to host Medicare session

CADILLAC - Representatives from U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra's office will host a free, daylong session to help seniors identify a Medicare Part D prescription plan that best fits their needs.

The deadline for Medicare beneficiaries to enroll is May 15, after which they will need to wait until the next open enrollment period of Nov. 15 through Dec. 31 to avoid paying a 1 percent per month penalty that they do not enroll.

The event is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at Baker College of Cadillac, Room 301, 9600 E. 13th St.

Area residents should RSVP by contacting Hoekstra's Holland District Office at (616)395-0030. Seniors should bring a complete list of prescribed medications, their Social Security and Medicare ID numbers, any supplemental health insurance information and their Social Security Medicare letter if they received one in the mail.

In addition to Hoekstra's staff, members of the Social Security Administration, local senior advocacy groups and medical assistance program volunteers will be on hand.

Mother to stand trial in shooting

EMU honor student was set to graduate April 30

By Anne Sullivan, Heritage Newspapers

PUBLISHED: April 27, 2006

A mother accused of killing her 23-year-old daughter while she slept will stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

Sharon Radtke, 56, of Taylor was bound over for trial April 19 by 23rd District Judge Geno Salomone.

She will be arraigned May 3 in the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice on charges of first-degree murder and using a firearm to commit a felony.

Lisa Raymond, lead attorney with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, read a statement from the medical examiner reporting that Lisa Radtke, an Eastern Michigan Student, was killed at about 11:50 p.m. April 7 by a single gunshot wound to the head while she was sleeping in her bed.

Bonita Hayes, the mother of Sharon Radtke and the grandmother of Lisa Radtke, was the only one called to testify at yesterday's preliminary examination. Her testimony was emotional at times.

She lived in the house in the 8000 block of William with her daughter and granddaughter.

Lisa Radtke was preparing to graduate April 30 from EMU and returned home April 7 to do her laundry and spend the night, Hayes testified.

Her granddaughter arrived home at about 7 p.m. and was planning to leave the next day to get things in order for her upcoming graduation, her grandmother said. At about 10 p.m., Hayes went to bed and her daughter and granddaughter were staying up to watch a movie, she testified.

At midnight she woke up and heard her daughter on the telephone.

"I asked who she was talking to at this hour of the night," Hayes said. "She said, 'The police.' I asked why and she said she shot Lisa. I said, 'Where is she?' She said, 'She's in the bedroom.'"

Hayes said she went to look in the bedroom and saw her granddaughter lying on her stomach in bed. She didn't turn on the light.

"I touched her arm," Hayes said. "It was warm. I said, 'Lisa, can you wake up and talk to grandma?'"

Her granddaughter did not respond.

Hayes said she was in shock, did not see any blood, and asked her daughter what she had done.

Sharon Radtke was sitting on a chair, calmly talking on the phone to the police and gave her mother the phone, Hayes said.

Sharon Radtke had purchased the gun she used in the crime for protection several years ago, Hayes said.

Ira Harris, the attorney representing Sharon Radtke, asked Hayes if her daughter had been treated for emotional or mental problems, and Hayes said yes, through the years.

She said her daughter suffered from depression and wasn't taking medication since losing her job, but she thought she had called a doctor.

Harris also asked Hayes if the loss of her daughter's job had any impact on her daughter.

Hayes said yes.

"It was bad," Hayes said. "She thought she would lose the home, be in the street and Lisa be out there, a young pretty girl, and would be raped. It was bad. I had no idea how bad."

As Hayes walked away from the witness stand, Radtke called out in a weak voice, "Mom, Mom, Mom." Officers told her to be quiet.

METRO DETROIT

Unger jury to visit site of death today

Challenges await both sides in trial

May 3, 2006

BY FRANK WITSIL
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

After opening statements in his trial today, Mark Unger -- the Huntington Woods man charged with killing his wife -- and the jurors who will decide his fate are expected to visit the resort where Florence Unger's body was found Oct. 25, 2003.

They will see the rented cottage at Watervale, the picturesque resort where the Ungers stayed with their two young boys, the wooden deck where the Ungers stood and where Florence Unger fell -- or was pushed -- off, the concrete slab on which she hit her head and the crystal-clear lake where her body was found floating a few feet from the shoreline.

And they will wrestle with this question: Was her death an accident or a homicide? Watervale, a former lumber town about 10 miles from the Benzie County Courthouse, is a charming collection of Victorian homes that serve as summer getaways. The Ungers stayed there each year. The family made a weekend visit in 2003, Mark Unger has said, to see the colorful fall leaves.

The trial -- which began last week with three days of jury selection and is expected to take a month -- presents challenges for the prosecution and defense. The prosecution, a team of three experienced lawyers led by state Assistant Attorney General Donna Pendergast, will have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Unger, now 45, killed his 37-year-old wife.

"Every murder trial is challenging because the stakes are so high," Rusty Hills, a spokesman for the attorney general, said Tuesday.

And while the prosecutors have a long list of witnesses, they don't have an eyewitness to the crime, a weapon or a confession.

In fact, Mark Unger has repeatedly said in interviews that he did not kill his wife and that he cared for her deeply.

At the same time, circumstantial evidence can add up, said Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith.

"If you have enough of it, it makes your case for you," said Smith, who is not part of the prosecution team. "Every case is a puzzle. Every piece of evidence fills in that puzzle.

You are never going to have enough evidence to fill in the entire puzzle. But you need to

be able to keep the jury's attention and let them see how you got from point A to point B."

Pendergast does have a witness, Fred Oeflein, who says he saw the couple on the deck together; another witness, Glenn Stark, who says he and Florence Unger had an affair; several witnesses who will testify the marriage was troubled, and a forensic pathologist, Oakland County Medical Examiner Dr. L.J. Dragovic, who says the death was a homicide.

The defense has a different challenge: explaining how Florence Unger died, if she was not killed.

Legally, Unger is presumed innocent until proved otherwise, but one of his attorneys, Robert Harrison, acknowledges that if the defense fails to offer an alternative theory of Florence Unger's death, jurors might decide to accept the one the state puts forth.

Harrison, who leads a team of four attorneys, plans to call several scientific expert witnesses to counter the prosecution's claims and to explain how Florence Unger's death was an accident. The deck was old and slippery, with rotted wood and structural problems, he has said.

Harrison's lineup of witnesses includes Massachusetts Institute of Technology adjunct professor Igor Paul; structural engineer David Ruby, and Wayne County Medical Examiner Dr. Carl Schmidt. Harrison is undecided whether he will call Mark Unger.

Contact **FRANK WITSIL** at 248-351-3690 or witsil@freepress.com.

WHO'S WHO IN THE UNGER TRIAL

-
- **Mark Unger**, 45, of Huntington Woods is charged with killing his wife, Florence. The couple had been married 13 years. Unger, a former mortgage broker and local sports announcer, is on disability because of substance-abuse problems.

- **Florence Unger**, 37, died in October 2003 while on vacation with her husband and two sons, Max, 12, and Tyler, 9, at a rented cottage at the Watervale resort in Benzie County. She was working as a mortgage loan officer at a Royal Oak bank. She had filed for divorce in August 2003.

- **Donna Pendergast**, a prosecutor with the state Attorney General's Office, is the lead prosecutor in the case. She is a former Oakland County assistant prosecutor.

- **Glenn Stark**, who now lives in Bozeman, Mont., testified in Unger's preliminary exam that he and Florence Unger exchanged intimate e-mails for two years and had sex four times, the last time just a week before her body was found Oct. 25.

- **Robert Harrison**, Mark Unger's attorney, is with Robert Harrison & Associates of Birmingham and has had other high-profile clients including James P. Hoffa and Kenneth J. Graham, the former chief executive officer of Thyssen Inc.

- **Benzie County Circuit Judge James Batzer** will preside over the trial. He is the chief judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit, which is made up of two counties -- Manistee and Benzie. Batzer reinstated the first-degree murder charge against Unger and revoked his \$100,000 bond. He has ruled that Oakland County Medical Examiner Dr. L.J. Dragovic will be permitted to testify in the case. Dragovic has concluded the death was a homicide by drowning.

- **Linn and Maggie Duncan**, who had rented a cottage near the Ungers every year for a dozen years, have been key witnesses. Maggie Duncan found Florence Unger's body on Oct. 25, 2003, floating in Lower Herring Lake. Her husband, Linn, testified in Mark Unger's preliminary exam that he told Unger that Florence was dead.

Compiled by Frank Witsil



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

DHS welfare reform plan will help put more people back to work, preserve safety net

May 3, 2006

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) today released details of its expanded welfare reform plan. The plan will enable more families to achieve self-sufficiency, save taxpayers \$12 million dollars, and meet new federal workforce participation requirements.

"A key part of our economic plan is ensuring that every person in MI has the skills they need to get a good job," said Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. "This program provides that opportunity for thousands of people currently dependent on welfare while saving the state money."

The DHS plan includes expansion of the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) pilots. JET was developed jointly with the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) to help welfare recipients become self-sufficient and permanently attached to the labor force. The DHS plan, which includes projected cost savings of \$12 million, enlarges JET pilots already underway as part of the FY 2006 budget and becomes part of the department's fiscal year 2007 budget proposal.

Beginning in September 2004, DHS director Marianne Udow and then-DLEG director David Hollister led a broad-based welfare reform workgroup in the development of a new approach to creating permanent workforce status for DHS clients. The JET approach grew out of this workgroup, and the pilot programs were included in the fiscal year 2006 DHS budget.

"The Jobs, Education and Training approach fundamentally changes the way we move families off welfare and toward self-sufficiency," Udow said. "Instead of telling those on welfare to 'get a job, any job,' the program supports them in developing job skills and moving permanently off of the welfare rolls."

Current JET pilot sites are in Kent, Oakland, Sanilac, and Wayne counties. The expanded plan increases the population served from 15 percent of the targeted caseload to 49 percent.

The DHS plan will:

- Help those who are work-ready move quickly back into the workforce.
- Use a thorough up-front assessment and "Family Self-Sufficiency Plan" to tailor supports and services to the individual circumstances of recipient and family.
- Expand educational and training opportunities so clients gain the skills they need to get a good paying job.

- more -

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- Focus vocational training opportunities on jobs the Michigan economy needs (e.g., health care, construction).
- Provide supportive services when clients face serious barriers to work, with the goal of reducing/removing those barriers so clients can participate in work or work preparation.
- Provide advocacy and support for those who are making application for Supplemental Security Income.
- Extend post-employment support from 90 days to 180 days to help clients retain jobs and prepare a plan for advancement.

“The DHS welfare reform plan will meet federal requirements within the federal time frame, protect the safety net, and help people become permanently attached to the labor force so they can move their families out of poverty,” said Udow. “We want to get more people working permanently in Michigan – self-sufficiency is better for families, and what is better for families is better for children.”

For more information about the Department of Human Services, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs

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